

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, March 3, 2024
Third Sunday of Lent
Cycle B

Four high school classmates decided to cut classes one morning and didn't go to school until noon. They said to the teacher, "Our car had a flat tire, that's why we're very late". They were so relieved when they saw the teacher smile and heard her say, "Okay, I understand boys. You missed the exam, but you can make it up right now". Whereupon she seated them in the four corners of the room, away from one another. "Now you will answer just one questions", the teacher said. "Which tire was flat?" And the boys, profusely perspiring, had all different answers. Of course, they lied about having a flat tire.

The story has a parallel to Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in this Sunday's gospel. In their dialogue, the woman's response is half-truth and evasive. Jesus is asking her to fetch her husband. The woman replies: "I have no husband".

Jesus' witty rejoinder makes it clear that he knows her story already: "You're right, because you have had five husbands and the man with whom you are living is not your husband. The woman's life is a mess. But take note that Jesus did not condemn her; neither did he excuse her.

The astonishing answer from a total stranger leads the woman to realize that she is in the presence of someone beyond her normal experience. Sir, I can see you are a prophet. She is beginning to move from the early level to the spiritual, culminating in Christ self-revelation as the Messiah. "I who speak to you am he.

In this simple episode at the well, we have the drama of a soul struggling to rise from worldly things to a recognition of Jesus. We call it, spiritual awakening. All of us are much like the Samaritan woman. We do have dark areas in our life; one way or another we have

made a mess of our lives, and we try to hide it. God knows about them already. Our life is an open book. But we draw hope and courage from the sympathetic, affirming attitude of our Lord as manifested towards the woman at the well.

This encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well reveals the heart of God. God doesn't care about our past, he only cares that we come back to him, to embrace his mercy and love in the sacrament of reconciliation.

My dear friends, in this season of Lent we are given the opportunity to look into the dark areas of our life, and make a fresh start. Jesus is thirsting for our faith and love of him. Like the Samaritan woman, it is only in our desire to embrace God's love in the sacrament that a greater miracle can happen in our lives.